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Penn Vet Student Inspiration Awards

The Penn Vet Student Inspiration Awards will be given annually to two current Penn Vet students. Each of the two \$100,000 awards is designed to inspire ambition and reward enterprise, creativity, vision and talent. These awards will encourage students to invent their future in veterinary medicine and provide opportunities far beyond those at any other veterinary school in the world. The awards recognize students' potential to advance the frontiers of veterinary medicine and expand the profession's impact on the well-being of animals and society.

Rachel Toaff-Rosenstein, V'09

Rachel Toaff-Rosenstein's parents, both physicians, had always encouraged their daughter to pattern her career after theirs and prepare herself to practice medicine. But Rachel had other plans. "From the get-go, my interest focused on animals," Rachel said. "I did indeed pursue a medical career, but one that involved four- as opposed to two-legged patients." At Penn Vet, this educational pursuit has been extraordinary for Rachel: two years running, she has ranked first in her class and was elected to Phi Zeta, the honor society of veterinary medicine, in 2007.

As a vet student, Rachel became increasingly interested in animal welfare and how veterinarians can contribute to animals' quality of life. She revitalized the Penn Vet Animal Welfare Society and organized well-attended panel discussions on the topic. Rather than just concentrating on small animals and horses, though, Rachel started thinking about other kinds of animals. "I recently decided to focus my passion for animal welfare issue on food-producing species," she explained. She intends to earn a doctoral degree studying welfare assessment and the behavior of farm animals. "This additional training will serve as a



powerful complement to my VMD degree and allow me to become a leader in the farm-animal welfare field, bridging gaps among veterinarians, the agricultural industry and consumers." Farm-animal welfare science is a relatively new field of study, and Rachel believes veterinarians are uniquely qualified to address certain practical considerations such as physiological, pathological, and production parameters when analyzing an animal's welfare.

Specifically, Rachel's goal has a four-pronged approach that incorporates farm-level, professional and societal elements:

1. To work as a consultant in the field to advise and help implement health care and husbandry changes;
2. To influence policy affecting the welfare of farm animals;
3. To delineate a clear role for veterinarians in farm-animal welfare; and
4. To develop curricula for both pre- and post-graduate veterinarians that equip the veterinary profession with tools that will allow it to take a leadership role in farm-animal welfare.

"The Inspiration Award promises to liberate me from the constraints of my educational debt. It will allow me to pursue my dream of pioneering new roles for veterinary medicine in the burgeoning debate on food-animal welfare," Rachel said. ■



about

Rachel Toaff-Rosenstein

Home town: Bala Cynwyd, PA

Schools attended: Hebrew University (B.Sc. in animal science)

Hobbies: volunteer work, home-improvement projects, horseback riding, photography

Penn Vet activities: Animal Welfare Society, NIH/Merck Summer Research Program, Phi Zeta, research assistant in diabetes mellitus study in dogs

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Thomas Parsons, V'86, associate professor of swine production medicine

This year's winners were selected by an awards committee comprised of **Drs. Jill Beech, V'72**, professor of medicine; **Dottie Brown**, assistant professor of surgery; **R. O. Davies**, professor of physiology; **Olena Jacenko**, associate professor of physiology; **James Lok**, professor of parasitology; **Dean Richardson**, chief of surgery at the George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals; **Sheldon Steinberg, V'59**, emeritus professor of neurology; and **Thomas Van Winkle, V'75**, professor of pathology. The committee's decisions were based on 1,000-word essays outlining how applicants will use the funds to fulfill a life-changing dream in veterinary medicine.

Warren Waybright, V'09

“**O**ne World, One Health, One Medicine.” For Warren Waybright, that’s more than the slogan of the American Veterinary Medical Association—it is how he hopes North American veterinary students will feel after working with students in developing countries to set up spay/vaccination clinics and rural food-animal health programs. Warren’s goal—even while still a student—is to create an international program that brings together veterinary students and professionals from developed and developing nations; those from the former part of the world will deliver technology, expertise and equipment, while those from the latter will lend a greater understanding of local cultures and animal health and management issues.

“Most animals in developing countries never receive veterinary care,” Warren explains. “The lack



of funds, access to veterinary services and insufficient training for veterinary students in the latest technologies contribute to this condition. The short projects I envision will facilitate lasting interest and partnerships, and will have a multiplying effect as veterinarians tackle the issues of global medicine.”

In fact, Warren already has had the chance to see this kind of international collaboration first hand; in 2007 he interned for about two months with World Concern Bolivia, participating in community programs that followed micro-loans to educate rural villagers in livestock husbandry. He assisted in drawing blood with American and Bolivian veterinarians and local agriculture students in an effort to eradicate Brucellosis. Later in the summer, Warren helped translate for two veterinarians visiting Bolivia to speak at a veterinary congress, and he took part in teaching Bolivian vets how to perform the first bovine caesarians in the country’s history. Based on these experiences, Warren was invited to lecture at the Universidad Autónoma Gabriel Rene Moreno on dairy production.

“I intend to expand the projects to other Latin American countries and then to other continents, in addition to working in a food-animal practice after graduation,” Warren said. “The advantage of this model is that I can develop state-of-the-art practice skills, which can be invaluable in working in developing agrarian societies. . . . Students will return from these short trips with improved cultural awareness and be better equipped to bring animal health care to immigrant communities in the United States. I hope they also will consider a career where veterinarians are underrepresented in global health.”

about Warren Waybright

Home town: Gettysburg, PA

Family business: Mason Dixon Farms, Inc.

Schools attended: Cornell University (B.S. in animal science)

Penn Vet activities: class academic liaison, Food Animal Club president, Christian Veterinary Mission fellowship leader, organized dairy records and farming perspective elective

Languages spoken: French, Spanish

Faculty sponsor: Dr. James Ferguson, V'81, professor of clinical nutrition